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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re

Application of: WILSON, Joseph

Examiner: N. Boveja

Application No.: 10/669,791

Group: 3622

Filed: September 25, 2003

For: A CLIENT-SERVER SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR SEGMENTING
AND TARGETING CONTENT

Attorney Docket #: 54820-00602

[PROPOSED] AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTIONMail Stop Amendment
Commissioner for Patents
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

Responsive to the Office Action dated September 29, 2009, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejections made in view of the following response. A listing of the claims begins on page 2 of this response and Applicant's remarks begin on page 11.

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Withdrawn) A method of delivering content to an audience member over a plurality of digital mediums based on an audience member profile, said method comprising the steps of:

providing the audience member access to first and second digital mediums;

providing an audience member profile common to both the first and second digital mediums;

associating the audience member with a segment of audience members based on the audience member profile; and

delivering content to the audience member via the first and second digital mediums based on the association of the audience member with the segment of audience members.

2. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the first digital medium and the second digital medium comprise a digital medium having a uniquely addressable interface to the audience member.

3. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the first digital medium comprises a website, and the second digital medium comprises a digital medium selected from the group consisting of: a website, a cable system, a wireless communications system, and a non-web based Internet medium.

4. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the first digital medium comprises a website, and the second digital medium comprises a digital cable system.

5. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the audience member has a first unique identifier relating to the first digital medium and a second unique identifier relating to the second digital medium.

6. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 5, wherein the step of providing an audience member profile further comprises the steps of:

collecting profile data relating to the audience member via the first and second digital mediums;

associating the profile data by associating the first unique identifier with the second unique identifier; and

storing the profile data in a common audience member profile in a database.

7. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

identifying the segment of audience members with a segment identifier included in a segment-targeting cookie;

storing the segment-targeting cookie in a computer associated with the audience member; and

delivering content to the audience member based on the segment identifier.

8. (Currently Amended) A method of delivering content ~~to based on an audience member profile in an HTTP client-server computer system~~, comprising the steps of:

receiving an image request from a client computer ~~associated with the audience member~~ in response to transmission of a website page to the client computer, wherein said client computer includes a browser;

assigning ~~transmitting~~ a domain cookie containing a unique identifier for the browser of the client computer ~~to the computer associated with the audience member~~ in response to receiving the image first request;

storing profile data for the client ~~audience member~~ in a database;

identifying the ~~the~~ unique identifier for the client computer browser ~~audience member~~ in the domain cookie;

accessing the profile data for the client ~~audience member~~ from the database in response to identification of the unique identifier for the client computer browser ~~audience member~~;

associating the ~~audience member~~ client computer with a segment of ~~audience members~~ client computers based on the profile data;

transmitting a segment-targeting cookie, which includes a segment identifier for the segment of client computers ~~audience members~~, to the computer ~~associated with the client computer~~ audience member, wherein said segment identifier is separate from said unique identifier;

receiving a request for a website page from the client computer ~~associated with the audience member~~; and

delivering content to the client computer ~~audience member~~ based on the segment identifier in response to receiving the request for the website page.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 8 further comprising the steps of:

determining the absence of a domain cookie with a unique identifier for the client computer browser ~~audience member~~ in response to a request for transmission of a second website page to the client computer;

~~assigning~~ setting a second domain cookie containing a unique identifier to the browser ~~for the audience member in a second domain cookie~~; and

transmitting the second domain cookie to the client computer associated ~~with the audience member~~.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 9 wherein the client computer ~~audience member~~ is associated with a default segment of client computers ~~audience members~~ as a result of transmitting the second domain cookie to the client computer ~~associated with the audience member~~.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 8 further comprising the steps of:

providing a primary website domain that is related to a domain associated with the website page;

providing the computer with a primary website cookie associated with the primary website domain, said primary website cookie having the unique identifier for the client computer audience member; and

modifying the domain cookie transmitted to the client computer in response to receiving the image request to contain the unique identifier for the client computer browser audience member in response to transmission of the primary website cookie to the client computer.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8 further comprising the steps of:

collecting profile data relating to the client audience member; and

storing the collected profile data for the client audience member in the database.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 13 wherein the step of collecting profile data includes collecting data from one or more sources selected from the group consisting of: a database, website page requests, advertisement requests, user survey data, direct response data, and website search requests.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 8 wherein the segment of audience members client computers is defined by rules that recognize any common affinity between two or more audience members client computers.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 8 wherein the content is delivered to the client computer ~~audience member~~ by a server selected from the group consisting of: an advertisement server, an email server, a streaming media server, and a website server.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 8 wherein the step of associating the client computer ~~audience member~~ with a segment of client computers ~~audience members~~ further comprises the steps of:

comparing the profile data of a plurality of clients ~~audience members~~; and
forming a segment of client computers ~~audience members~~ based on the comparison of client ~~audience member~~ profile data.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 13 further comprising the steps of:

periodically collecting additional profile data for the client ~~audience member~~; and

periodically determining which client computer ~~audience member~~ segments the client computer ~~audience member~~ is associated with, based on the profile data.

19. (Currently Amended) A method of delivering content to a client computer associated with ~~an audience member~~ a client based on client profile data, comprising the steps of:

storing client audience-member profile data in a database;

assigning a domain cookie containing identifying the audience member
with a unique identifier to a browser associated with the client computer stored in the
database;

accessing profile data for the client stored in the database in response to
identification of the unique identifier in the domain cookie;

associating the client computer audience-member with a segment of client
computers audience-members based on the profile data;

identifying the segment of client computers audience-members with a
segment identifier included in a segment-targeting cookie, wherein said segment
identifier is separate from said unique identifier;

transmitting the segment-targeting cookie to the client [[a]] computer
~~associated with the audience member;~~ and

delivering content to the client computer audience-member based on the
segment identifier.

20. (Original) The method of Claim 19 wherein the profile data includes
information from one or more sources selected from the group consisting of: a
database, website page requests, advertisement requests, user survey data, direct
response data, and website search requests.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 19 wherein the step of
associating the client computer audience-member with a segment of client computers
audience-members further comprises the steps of:

comparing the profile data of a plurality of client computers audience members; and

forming a segment of client computers audience-members based on the comparison of client audience-member profile data.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 19 further comprising the steps of:

periodically collecting additional profile data for the client audience member; and

periodically determining which client computer audience-member segments the client computer audience-member is associated with based on the profile data.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 19 wherein the content is delivered to the client computer audience-member by a server selected from the group consisting of: an advertisement server, an email server, a streaming media server, and a website page server.

24. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1 wherein the first digital medium delivers a request for a first website page from the audience member, and wherein the step of associating the audience member with a segment of audience members based on the audience member profile comprises the further steps of:

storing a cookie associated with the first website page in a computer associated with the audience member;

identifying a unique identifier for the audience member in the cookie;
associating the audience member with profile data based on the unique identifier; and
associating the audience member with a segment of audience members based on the profile data.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 8 wherein the website page is delivered over a first digital medium, and wherein said method further comprises the steps of:

providing the client ~~audience member~~ access to a second digital medium;
associating the client computer ~~audience member~~ with the profile data such that the profile data is common for both the first and second digital mediums;
associating the client computer ~~audience member~~ with a segment of client computers ~~audience members~~ based on the common profile data; and
delivering additional content to the client computer ~~audience member~~ via the first and second digital mediums based on the association of the client computer ~~audience member~~ with the segment of client computers ~~audience members~~.

26. (New) The method of Claim 8 wherein said segment-targeting cookie includes more than one segment identifier.

27. (New) The method of Claim 22 wherein the client computer segments are identified with segment identifiers included in the segment-targeting cookie.

28 (New) The method of Claim 8 wherein the content is an advertisement.

29. (New) A method of delivering targeted advertisements in an HTTP client-server computer system comprising:

receiving a request for content from a client computer;

transmitting the content to the client computer;

receiving a first cookie having client computer identifier data;

identifying the client computer from among a plurality of different client computers using the client computer identifier data included in the first cookie;

receiving a second cookie having content segment identifier data based on the content requested by the client computer, the content segment identifier data of the second cookie being different from the client identifier data of the first cookie;

classifying the client computer within at least one of a plurality of different client content segments based on the identification of the client computer using the client identifier data included in the first cookie and based on a plurality of client profile data stored in a database;

identifying a targeted advertisement from among a plurality of advertisements based on the classification of the client computer within the at least one of the plurality of different client content segments; and

transmitting the identified targeted advertisement to the client computer.

30. (New) The method of Claim 29, wherein the content segment identifier data identifies client computers that are to receive the same targeted advertisement based on the client profile data.

REMARKS

The status of the claims is as follows. Claims 8-23 and 25 are pending in the application and rejected. Claims 1-7 and 24 are withdrawn. Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 8, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, and the withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 8 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Applicant also acknowledges with appreciation the withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 8-10 and 13-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Claims 8-11, 16, 19 and 23 are currently amended. Claims 26-30 are new. Claims 8-11, 13-23 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicant respectfully traverses the foregoing rejections.

The Claim Amendments Are Supported By The Specification

Claims 8 and 19 are amended to recite "assigning a domain cookie containing a unique identifier to [a] the browser" wherein the browser is associated with a computer to which content is delivered. This step is supported by paragraph [0030] of the specification which states "a primarydomain.com cookie containing a unique identifier for the audience member is assigned to the browser 300."

The Section 103 Rejections Should Be Withdrawn

Claims 8-10 and 13-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Merriman et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,948,061 (hereinafter "Merriman") in view of Paltenghe et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,421,729 (hereinafter "Paltenghe"). Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Merriman in view of Paltenghe, and in further view of do Rosario Botelho et al, U.S. Published Patent

Application No. 2002/0069105 (hereinafter "do Rosario"). Claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Merriman in view of Paltenghe, and in further view of Official Notice. Claims 8 and 19 are independent claims, and Claims 9-11, 13-18, 20-23 and 25 depend directly or through intervening claims from one or the other of the two independent claims.

Claim 8 recites, *inter alia*, the steps of (i) "associating the client computer with a segment of client computers based on the profile data," (ii) "transmitting a segment-targeting cookie, which includes a segment identifier for the segment of client computers, to the client computer," and (iii) "delivering content to the client computer based on the segment identifier." Similarly, Claim 19 recites, *inter alia*, the steps of (i) "associating the client computer with a segment of client computers based on the profile data," (ii) "identifying the segment of client computers with a segment identifier included in a segment-targeting cookie," (iii) "transmitting the segment-targeting cookie to the client computer," and (iv) "delivering content to the client computer based on the segment identifier."

The latest Office Action acknowledges that the foregoing claim limitations are not disclosed in Merriman. See Office Action at 6-7. It is asserted that Paltenghe teaches identifying the segment of audience members with a segment identifier included in a segment-targeting cookie, wherein the segment identifier is separate from said unique identifier, transmitting a segment-targeting cookie to a computer associated with the audience member, and delivering content to the audience member based on the segment identifier. Moreover, it is asserted that it would have been obvious for Merriman to include the foregoing teaching of Paltenghe "to identify the user and their preferences without slowing down the server when only the information in one of the

cookies is needed and to present only the information the user indicated was of interest.” Applicant respectfully disagrees both with the characterization of what Paltenghe teaches and that it would have been obvious to combine such teaching with that of Merriman.

Paltenghe discloses no more than use of a cookie to trigger looking up a user’s stored preferences in a file maintained at a website server. Specifically, Paltenghe states:

For example, a website can request that the user fill out a form detailing the type of information the user prefers to retrieve each time she visits the particular website. The user’s preferences are stored in a file maintained at the website server and linked to a specific cookie transmitted to the user’s PC. The next time that particular PC accesses the website, the cookie transmitted to the website identifies the file containing the user’s preferences so that only the information the user indicated was of interest is provided.

Paltenghe at col. 2, lines 56-65 (emphasis added).

Moreover, the Paltenghe user preference cookie is individualized to each user because “the cookie transmitted to the website identifies the file containing the user’s preferences so that only the information the user indicated was of interest is provided.” *Id.* at col. 2, lines 62-65.

Storing user preferences in a file at a website server, and accessing that file using a user preference cookie falls far short of disclosing use of a segment-targeting cookie. Use of a segment-targeting cookie first requires associating a client computer with a segment of client computers, sending a segment-targeting cookie with a segment identifier to the client computer, and sending content to the client computer based on the segment identifier in the segment-targeting cookie. The Examiner’s attention is invited to paragraphs [0034]-[0039] of the present application as support for the foregoing, and more particularly to paragraph [0036], which provides:

A method of delivering targeted content to an audience member based on the segment affinity data is illustrated in Fig. 6. With reference to Fig. 6, an audience member requests a website page in the network of related websites in step 230. The Targeting Engine is notified of the website page request in step 232. Responsive to the audience members request for a website page, in step 234 the Targeting Engine determines whether or not a domain cookie, associated with the requested website page, includes a unique identifier for the audience member. If a unique identifier is not identified, the Targeting Engine will provide a website domain cookie with a unique identifier as described above in connection with Fig. 4. Once a website domain cookie is provided with a unique identifier, in step 236 the Targeting Engine may determine whether or not a segment-targeting cookie is already associated with the audience member in the data warehouse. The segment-targeting cookie may include a segment identifier that indicates the segment(s) to which the audience member belongs. If segment affinity data is stored in the data warehouse for the audience member, then a segment-targeting cookie is created and stored in the audience member computer with the appropriate segment identifier in step 238. In step 240, content may be delivered to the audience member based on the segment identifier in the segment-targeting cookie stored in the audience member computer.

The segment-targeting cookie includes one or more segment identifiers which permit the segment or segments with which a client computer has been associated to be readily identified without the need to identify the client computer associated preferences in a file at a website server. The segment identifier permits large segments of client computers to be targeted with the same content without the need to assess the individualized preferences associated with each client in real time at a website server. Thus, the Paltenghe user preference cookie, which requires accessing preference data at a central server, cannot be equated with the segment-targeting cookie recited in Claims 1 and 19.

Further, even if Paltenghe disclosed segment-targeting cookies, which it does not, there is no basis to combine the teaching of Paltenghe with that of Merriman. In order to establish a prima facie case of obviousness, according to a test predominately used by the courts, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some

suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim elements. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art and not based on applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

In *KSR Int'l. Co. v. Teleflex, Inc.*, 550 U.S. 398, 82 USPQ2d 1385 (2007), the Supreme Court did not dismiss the usefulness of the well established "teaching, suggestion, or motivation" test set forth above, but merely cautioned against its rigid application. The Supreme Court noted that the Federal Circuit "no doubt has applied the test in accord with these principles [set forth in KSR] in many cases." *Id.* at 412, 82 USPQ2d at 1396. Regardless of the precise test used, the Court, quoting *In re Kahn*, cautioned that "[R]ejections on obviousness cannot be sustained by mere conclusory statements; instead, there must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness." *Id.* at 411, 82 USPQ2d at 1396.

The latest Office Action asserts that it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of Merriman with that of Paltenghe based solely on the conclusory statement that Merriman would have wanted to "identify the user and their preferences without slowing down the server when only the information in one of the cookies is needed and to present only the information the user indicated was of interest." See Office Action at 7.

First, Paltenghe does not teach use of a cookie that would not slow down the server. In Paltenghe, the cookie merely triggers the look up of preference information in a file maintained at a website server. Thus, Paltenghe requires a real time lookup of individualized preferences of individual users which will necessarily be a slower process than that attendant to use of the claimed segment-targeting cookie.

Second, the Office Action does not identify any suggestion or motivation that comes from the prior art references themselves for one of ordinary skill in the art to use the Paltenghe user preference cookie in the system of Merriman. The statement in the Office Action that is asserted to justify the combination of prior art references is a conclusory and hindsight statement without support in the references.

In fact, there would be no motivation to combine the teachings of the two prior art references, because Merriman, like Paltenghe, discloses that an ad server may obtain a variety of information about one particular user, and that this information may be stored in a database to be used to select an advertisement to be sent to the user. See Merriman at column 5, lines 50-63 and column 6, lines 6-11. In neither Paltenghe nor Merriman is the user associated with a segment of other users. The method described in both Paltenghe and Merriman determines preferences on an individual user-by-user basis from a database or server, and does not identify a group or segment of client computers by merely receiving a segment identifier in a segment-targeting cookie.

All of the obviousness rejections of Claims 8-23 and 25 depend on the combination of Merriman and Paltenghe. Neither Merriman nor Paltenghe disclose a segment-targeting cookie or its use as claimed. Further, even if Paltenghe disclosed a segment-targeting cookie, there is no basis to combine the teachings of the two prior art references. Paltenghe is merely cumulative of the disclosure in Merriman. In view of

the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the obviousness rejection of Claims 8-23 and 25 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Applicant also wishes to point out that various of the dependent Claims 9-18, 20-23 and 25 are patentable for reasons independent of those set forth above. For example, Merriman fails to disclose the steps of determining the absence of a cookie with a unique identifier assigned to a browser and setting a unique identifier in a second domain cookie as a result, which are recited in Claims 9-10. Similarly, Merriman does not disclose the step of modifying a domain cookie as recited in Claim 11. Merriman also fails to disclose the step of defining a segment of client computers by rules that recognize any common affinity between two or more audience members recited in Claim 15. Merriman further fails to disclose the steps of comparing the profile data of a plurality of clients and forming a segment of client computers based on the comparison which are recited in Claims 17 and 21. Accordingly, the rejection of all pending claims, including but not limited to the foregoing specified dependent claims, should be withdrawn.

Should the Office believe anything further is required to place the application in condition for allowance the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below. A two-month extension of time fee is believed to be required for consideration of the present amendment and response. The Director is hereby authorized to charge any fee due and any deficiency or credit any overpayment to deposit account number 03-2469. Moreover, if the deposit account contains insufficient funds, the Director is hereby invited to contact the undersigned to arrange payment.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: February __, 2010

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